



**Tompkins Cortland Community College
Strategic Planning and Assessment Framework**

Vision

To see strengths and unique potential in every person. To inspire people to make the courageous choice to learn, grow, and serve.

Mission

We serve our community by meeting educational needs, creating an environment for student success, and preparing our students and ourselves for citizenship in a global society.

Values

Learning

Learning is the most important outcome of our work. We are all learners and we know that teaching and learning happen both inside and outside the classroom. Each of us is responsible for our own learning and for supporting the learning of others.

Excellence

Exceptional teaching, programs, and service are critical to our success. We believe that excellence must be built on a foundation of integrity, honesty, and academic freedom. We achieve it by focusing on strengths, learning from experiences, and assessing our work.

Diversity

Diversity enriches our learning. We embrace diversity in all of its contexts, including strengths, perspectives, and people. We seek to increase our capacity to understand issues of difference, power, and privilege and to constructively resolve conflict.

Opportunity

Education transforms lives. We value access to education as a fundamental right. Our students can start here and go anywhere.

Innovation

Change creates vitality. We value active pursuit of thoughtful innovation and continuous improvement. We empower and challenge ourselves to create, innovate, take risks, and nurture an environment of trust.

Relationships

Relationships are the heart of our work. We value a caring, supportive community built on integrity, openness, honesty, and respect. Our internal and external relationships are flexible, collaborative, and interdependent.

Our Single Continuing Goal

Student Success – Our students succeed when they achieve their individual positive academic outcomes through dynamic integration of relevant, effective instruction and curricula, student engagement and community connections. These outcomes include completion of a degree or certificate, successful transfer, and new or enhanced employment.

Instruction and curricula that are relevant, effective and aligned with positive academic outcomes

Student Engagement evidenced by a high level of involvement in and enthusiasm for opportunities both inside and outside the classroom

Community Connections that build and maintain partnerships to support learning, cultivate resources, respond to local community needs and prepare students for citizenship in the global community

The three vital components are at the core of what we do as a College, and at their intersection is our single, unifying goal, student success. Inherent in each of these three components is the assumption that students learn and grow best when they are actively engaged in their learning and have a strong belief that the activities that lead to their learning are meaningful and important. To achieve our goal, we must engage students who are actively involved in both their own learning and the context in which it occurs. Those who do so are much more likely to achieve success than those who see learning as an isolated, largely passive enterprise. And we as an institution will create the conditions for that learning by eliminating the traditional barriers that have limited the interaction of these three vital components.

Student Success Assessment metrics include:

- Direct indicators of student success, e.g. graduation, transfer, employment
- Intermediate indicators (indicators that can lead to the ultimate outcome or increase the likelihood of it occurring), e.g. course and program learning outcomes, retention, maintenance of academic standards, developmental student success in college-level courses, increases in engagement and hope measures
- Initiative-specific measures, both formative and summative

Our Mission, Vision, Values and Goal statements define who we are and hope to be. We also look at our goal in relation to the capacity builders and philosophical drivers we use to achieve the goal, pursue our mission and vision and live our values.

Capacity Builders strengthen our organizational capacity and the systems necessary for student success:

- **Resource development** including funding, technology and physical infrastructure
- Development and maintenance of a **Culture** of learning based on an environment of mutual respect, collaboration, transparency, and trust
- **Human Resources Development** including professional and leadership development coupled with disciplined hiring and development practices
- **Organizational alignment** with our mission, vision, values and goal

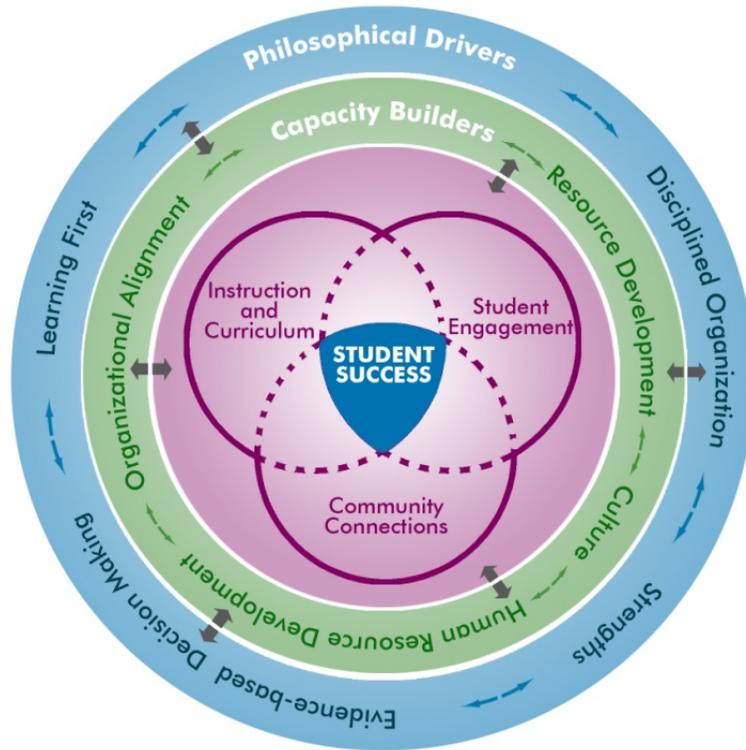
Beginning with the organizational restructuring implemented in 2008, we have engaged in processes that have enhanced our capacity to understand and address challenges and opportunities through coordinated efforts. In our organizational culture, we make information readily available and provide extensive opportunities for participation in discussion of key issues so that decisions may be made based upon deep and broad understanding. In developing our resources – financial, physical, and human – we work to align our systems and structures to work in collaboration both to reduce the waste of energy that results from internal struggles and to develop a culture that is truly supportive of student success.

Decisions, both large and small, about how we will provide those experiences, are framed by our **Philosophical Drivers:**

- **Learning First** in every decision, policy, program, and practice
- **Strengths**-based development for students and staff, individually and collectively
- Maintaining a **Disciplined Organization** in relation to our people, thoughts and actions
- **Evidence-based Decision Making** and a culture of assessment at all levels of the organization

Our philosophical drivers have supported the development of our capacity to build an institution dedicated to achieving student success. A disciplined organization such as ours bases decisions on evidence, but even more, strives to ensure that the evidence used is both thorough and germane to the decision to be made. By operating in such a disciplined manner, we can capitalize on both individual and collective strengths while also confining our actions to those that address our core concerns. That is, by keeping student learning and success at the heart of our decision-making, we are able to sort through the array of possible initiatives confronting us to choose those which are most consistent with the College's core philosophy.

Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, uses the analogy of a flywheel to describe the “build-up to breakthrough” of organizations moving to greatness. There is no miracle moment or single defining action that creates the breakthrough, “each part of the system reinforces the other parts ... to form an integrated whole that is much more powerful than the sum of the parts,” and finally builds momentum to the point of breakthrough and maximum results. This “flywheel” graphic illustrates the interrelationship of all of our work across the college, whether or not providing direct student service:



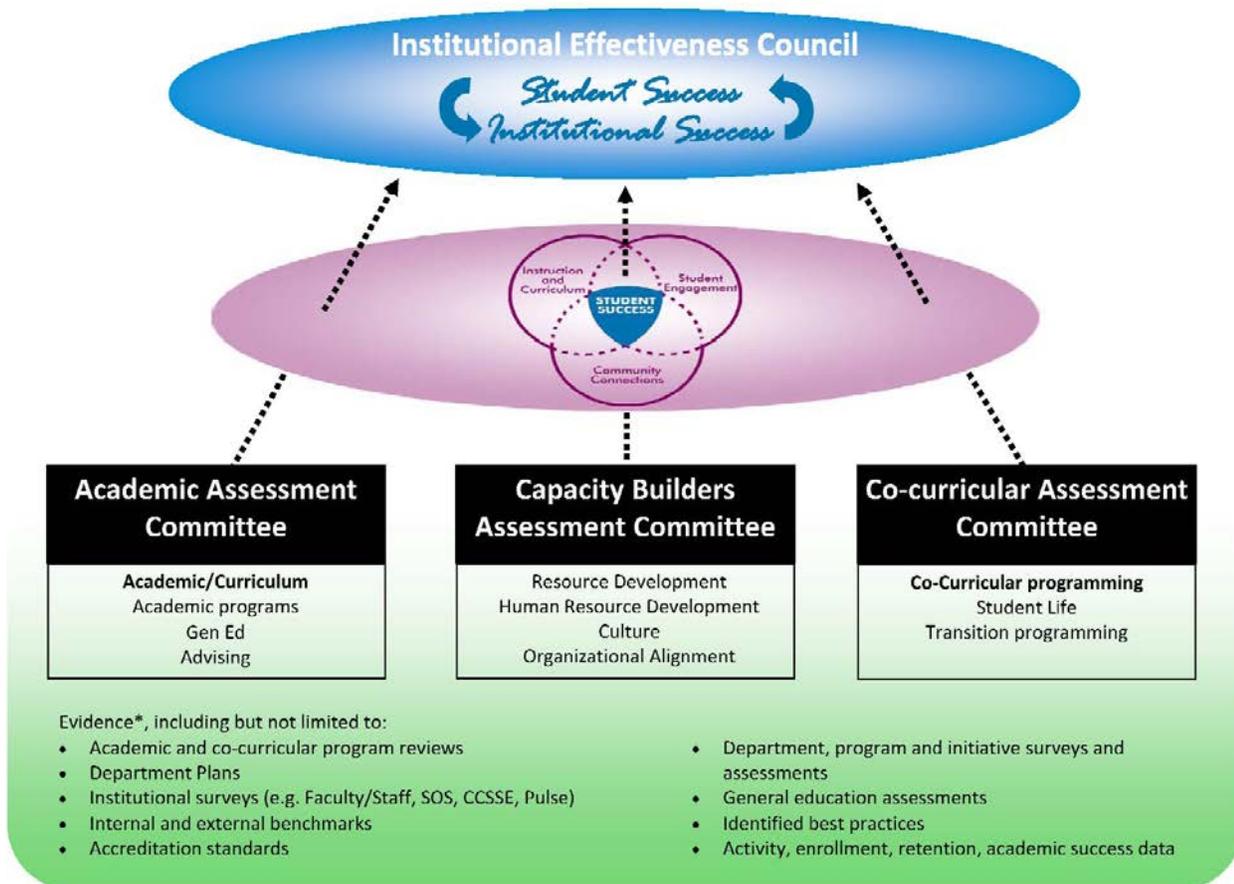
This planning framework is supported by multi-year institutional priorities coupled with departmental and cross-functional initiatives and annual planning and assessment.

The College has a long-standing dedication to meaningful data-informed assessment at all levels and all areas of the institution. All departments, functions and initiatives are engaged in annual planning and assessment to inform both their individual work and that of the college as a whole.

The Institutional Effectiveness Council and its three assessment committees are charged with our broader institutional assessment process. The committees and council assess broad indicators and provide feedback for improvement. Evidence is drawn from numerous sources, both internal and external, including, but not limited to:

- Periodic institution-wide surveys (e.g. CCSSE, SUNY Student Opinion Survey, Pulse survey, Faculty/Staff survey)
- Department plans
- Department, program, initiative and activity assessments
- General Education assessments
- Routinely available data analyses
- Custom data analyses
- Internal and external benchmarks and identified best practices
- Accreditation and certification standards

A broad overview of the institutional assessment structure is shown in the following graphic:



The Institutional Effectiveness Council oversees the assessment efforts of the three committees, and based upon their findings, makes recommendations to the Executive Council or other appropriate bodies for action. By keeping an eye on the entire assessment cycle and ensuring assessment evidence is acted upon, the IEC is charged with “closing the loop,” and making data driven institutional improvements.

The Council will also maintain a focus on the large-scale institutional level student success indicators that cut across functions at the College including direct measures of student success and intermediate institutional measures, e.g. retention, engagement and enrollment.